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Allen-Scott Report

Soviets May Be Testing MIRV

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Mr. Allen

Virtually no public attention is being paid to the recent massive increase in Soviet military space launchings.

Yet the facts are even more startling than Defense Secretary McNamara's belated pronouncement that the Russians are developing the so-called FOBS, or "Fractional Orbiting Bombardment System."

During the past 12 months, U.S. radar scanning posts located throughout the world have detected the launching of more than 100 Soviet satellites.

Averaging at times as high as 15 a month, the Soviet satellite launchings are double the number of U. S. space shots during the same period.

Secretary McNamara, in revealing the new Soviet space breakthrough recently, made no mention of this increases in Russian space activities. Instead, he limited his cool announcement to the FOBS, although the record Soviet launchings point to even more startling Russian weapon development in space.

As reported by McNamara, the FOBS finding was based on data gathered by U. S. detection devices monitoring several short-lived spacecraft launchings by the Russians in which the satellites did not complete a full orbit.

These experiments involved less than five per cent of the Soviet space tests during the past two years. McNamara made his announcement after learning that the House Armed Services Committee, headed by Rep. Mendel Rivers, D-S. C., had obtained details of these Soviet tests and was going to make the information public.

Still under intensive study by U. S. military-intelligence experts are the other Soviet space shots in which weapon-satellites were put into one or more orbits. Several were shattered into a number of pieces in carefully planned and controlled experiments.

According to a suppressed intelligence analysis, these tests strongly indicate the Soviets are developing and testing a MIRV — a multi-warhead independent re-entry vehicle.

In non-technical terms, the Russians may have succeeded in separating in flight at a pre-determined time and location a "cluster of satellites," each capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.

Such a menacing accomplishment would enable the Soviet to launch a satellite set to reach a certain point over the U. S., and then direct nuclear bombs at targets across the country from New York to California.

A great deal of other supporting evidence indicates that this is the nuclear-space weapon the Russians are developing rather than the so-called "Fractional Orbiting Bombardment System," as contendned by McNamara.

For instance, on Jan. 25, 1967, the Soviets launched the first of five known military space vehicles each announced and identified as a Cosmos, in which a principal object re-entered after one or more orbits and other objects returned a day or two later.

Although the Russians announced the orbital parameters for each, they never disclosed their orbital period because of the military significance, according to U. S. intelligence sources.

This, coupled with the perigees of approximately 100 miles indicated that the intent was to remain in space for from one to three orbits. These five Cosmos spacecraft and their launch dates were:

"Cosmos 139, Jan. 25; Cosmos 160, May 17; Cosmos 169, July 17; Cosmos 170, July 31; Cosmos 171, Aug. 8."

According to intelligence studies of these launchings, all appeared designed to test a MIRV, which would orbit the earth several times, rather than a FOBS that would make only a three-fourths orbit of the earth.

Also, at least one of these Cosmos vehicles, which came within 200 miles of Moscow, was believed to have been used to test that city's newly operational missile defense system.

Other Soviet tests, indicating more advanced MIRV experiments, included the splitting up of a "cluster of warheads" while the main vehicle orbited the earth.

In the McNamara Pentagon, it took more than a year for Congress and the public to find out about the Soviet development of a "Fractional Orbiting Bombardment System," although U. S. intelligence confirmed those tests more than a year ago.

The question now is when will the full story of Russia's increased space launchings and her development of the MIRV — already indicated by U. S. intelligence experts—be made known.